United Nations A/71/PV.79

General Assembly

Official Records

Seventy-first session

79th plenary meeting
Thursday, 27 April 2017, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mnatsakanyan (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 19 (*continued*)

Sustainable development

Draft resolutions (A/71/L.61/Rev.1, A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64)

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to introduce draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1.

Ms. King (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Few attributes of human performance have as much impact on our lives and our world as creativity. Outstanding achievement in the arts and science is held to depend on creativity. Creativity has been linked to the development of new social institutions and the leadership of extant institutions. Moreover, creativity has been shown to play a role in entrepreneurial activities and long-term economic growth. The study of creativity is an applied science. The most widely accepted definition of creativity — the production of novel ideas that are made useful — underscores the applied nature of the creative act.

The field of creativity has intrigued many authors and researchers for many decades and even centuries, going back to William Duff in 1767. He was primarily interested in establishing the cognitive traits that explained variance in people's accomplishments. Duff postulated three aspects: imagination, judgment and taste. Notably, he emphasized imagination as making the most important contribution to genius. Recent research has explored the role of creative expression in problem-solving and innovation and has focused on the development of methodologies aimed at deliberately nurturing creative thinking and mirroring the creative process in ways that allow individuals and groups to explicitly call on and employ their creative faculties.

Developed and developing countries around the world are recognizing the utility in such research findings and are embracing the idea that our creative capital is our most valuable asset today. We also agree that it is an asset that should be deployed in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is befitting, therefore, that, thus far, more than 80 States Members of the United Nations have joined today in calling for 21 April to be designated World Creativity and Innovation Day. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks all Member States that have sponsored and/or participated constructively in the consultations leading up to the introduction of draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1, entitled "World Creativity and Innovation Day", and those that may yet sponsor from the floor today.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada to introduce draft resolutions A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64.

Mr. Blanchard (Canada): I thank the Ambassador of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines for his leadership on the submission of draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1. I also pay tribute to Mr. You Dong Peng, Vice-Minister

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of the State Forestry Administration of China, and thank him for his leadership and for being here today.

In our capacity as Chair of the Bureau of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and as a country where forests assume a critical role in the economic, social and cultural fabric of the nation, Canada is proud to present for adoption to the General Assembly the first UNFF strategic plan for forests. The strategic plans represents a major milestone as it will launch a new business model for the Forum that mandates it to support the global goals on forests of the forest instrument and enhances the contribution of forests to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 15 is particularly important for forests. We believe that the adoption of the strategic plan by the General Assembly would send a strong and positive signal about the powerful role that forests can and must play in our collective future. Forests are essential to poverty alleviation, biodiversity conservation, food security, sustainable economic opportunity and so much more.

In conclusion, let me sincerely thank all delegations that participated in the negotiation process leading to this ambitious outcome. I also encourage us all to take advantage of the opportunity of the upcoming sessions of the UNFF to present sensible solutions and engage with all relevant stakeholders to catalyse forest action. The future of our forests and of our planet depend on the work we accomplish.

The Acting President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/71/L.61/Rev.1, A/71/L.63 and A/71/L.64.

We turn first to draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1, entitled "World Creativity and Innovation Day".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Ms. De Miranda (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution, and in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have also become sponsors of A/71/L.61/Rev.1: Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Estonia, Ghana, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, New Zealand, the Niger, the Philippines, Poland, Timor-Leste, Tonga and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/71/L.61/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 71/284).

The Acting President: We turn next to A/71/L.63, entitled "United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/71/L.63 was adopted (resolution 71/285).

The Acting President: We turn next to A/71/L.64, entitled "United Nations forest instrument". May I take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/71/L.64 was adopted (resolution 71/286).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor for explanations of vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. You Dong Peng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): It is an honour and pleasure to attend this important meeting of the General Assembly today to witness the adoption of the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030, a new political commitment of the international community on sustainable forest development. On behalf of the State Forestry Administration of China, I would like to extend warm congratulations on the adoption of the historic resolution 71/285 and our appreciation to the United Nations Forum on Forest secretariat and related parties for theircontributionfruitful work in the run-up to this meeting.

Forests have ecological, economic, social and many other functions. As Chinese President Xi Jinping has said:

> "The forest is the main body of the terrestrial ecosystem and the largest means of subsistence on which a country or a nation can rely. It is the foundation of survival for humankind and is closely linked with the preservation of life, freshwater, homeland security, species security and climate security."

The international community has reached broad consensus on forests, but there are still multiple challenges to global forest governance that severely limit sustainable forest development. The strategic plan is a new milestone on forests, unrivalled since the adoption of the first non-legally-binding instrument on all types of forests (resolution 62/98). It will provide a new and historic opportunities for global sustainable forest management. I believe that through the joint efforts of all Member States, forests will make greater contributions to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The Chinese Government attaches great importance to sustainable forest management, sees forests as major assets in building up ecosystems, incorporates conservation into the overall process of national development planning and promotes a series of innovative concepts of sustainable development, such as the concepts that ecosystem improvement means progress in civilization; that pellucid water and lush mountains are as valuable as gold and silver; that an improved ecosystem is basic human welfare; and that mountains, water, forests, farm lands and lakes should be managed in an integrated manner.

Those concepts are deeply embedded in the heart of the Chinese people and are being put into practice. The Chinese Government's recognition of the roles and functions of forests has reached unprecedented levels and is highly consistent with the strategic plan. Over the past decades, the Chinese Government has been firmly promoting national greening, sustainable forest management and the security of forest ecosystems, and has made outstanding achievements in forestation.

First, China's forest cover has increased from 13.92 per cent in 1992 to the current 21.66 per cent, and our forests reserves per unit area have continued to grow. Secondly, the protected area managed by the forestry sector accounts for 13 per cent of China's total land area, protecting 90 per cent of terrestrial ecosystem types. The trend of land desertification has been partially contained. Thirdly, the gross output value of the forest industry has grown by 4.75 times to nearly $1 trillion during the past decade. Fourthly, the collective forest tenure reform and the reform of State-owned forest regions and State-owned forest farms has enabled more than 400 million farmers to directly benefit from sustainable forest management. Tens of millions of job opportunities have been created, which effectively alleviates poverty and promotes economic, social and ecological development in a balanced way.

The United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 shoulders important historic responsibilities and has a significant mission in promoting sustainable forest development. I would like to take this opportunity to make three recommendations.

First, the global forest financing mechanism should be further strengthened to provide new and additional financial resources for Member States, especially developing countries, to implement the strategic plan. Secondly, countries should announce at their earliest convenience voluntary national contributions in consideration of their specific national setting and forest conditions, and take concrete actions to achieve the global forest goals. Thirdly, coordination among forest-related United Nations bodies, conventions and other international organizations should be strengthened in order to build synergies.

Finally, the Chinese Government will unswervingly implement the strategic plan and announce China's voluntary national contribution targets in due course. I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely invite all parties to attend the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, to be hosted in China in September, and join hands toward the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr. Singer (United States of America): When the United Nations strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 was adopted at the most recent special session of the United Nations Forum on Forests and in the Economic and Social Council last week, the United States made a statement clarifying its position on certain elements contained in the plan. We would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm those clarifications.

First, we understand that the actions contemplated under this plan are voluntary and do not purport to alter or affect rights or obligations under international law.

Regarding global forest goal 2.2, the United States supports efforts to improve the ability of small-scale enterprises to finance their businesses and sell their products. However, we must stress that the World Trade Organization (WTO) is the appropriate forum

for the negotiation of trade issues. The strategic plan does not represent an agreement on such issues, nor does it represent a commitment to provide new market access for goods or services. The strategic plan does not interpret or alter any WTO agreement or decision, including the agreement on trade-related aspects of intellectual property.

Regarding all references to the transfer of technology, the United States disassociates itself from such language, notably in paragraphs 15 and 58 (b).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 19.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.